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ABSTRACT

"America 2000" is a national strategy (not a federal program) designed to accomplish in nine years the six national education goals first articulated by the president and the state governors at the 1989 "Education Summit" in Charlottesville, Virginia. America 2000 is described as having four major "parts," and this booklet is organized around those parts: (1) Better and More Accountable Schools (improving the 110,000 existing schools, for today's students); (2) A New Generation of American Schools (bringing 535 new schools into existence by 1996, for tomorrow's students); (3) A Nation of Students (persuading yesterday's students/today's work force, to keep on learning); (4) Communities Where Learning Can Happen (identifying and designating committed "America 2000 Communities," willing to adopt the six national goals, develop a report card to measure their progress, and create and support one of the 535+ "New American Schools"). Some of the specific operational concepts involved in pursuing this strategy are: (1) "New World Standards" for what young Americans need to know, for each of the five core subjects (English, mathematics, science, geography, history); (2) "American Achievement Tests," a new (voluntary) nationwide examination, based on the five core subjects; (3) "Presidential Citations for Educational Excellence," awarded to high school students who do well on the achievement tests; (4) "Presidential Achievement Scholarships," rewarding academic excellence among needy college/university students; (5) "Merit Schools Program," rewarding schools that make notable progress toward the six goals; (6) "Governors' Academies for School Leaders"; (7) "Governors' Academies for Teachers"; (8) Alternative Certification Systems for Teachers; (9) "America 2000 Communities," designated by their governors; (10) The "New American Schools Development Corporation," a new nonprofit organization, to be established by the business community, that will award contracts for 3-7 "R&D Teams," that will help communities create the new schools. The booklet concludes with a "Glossary" of 20 key terms/concepts used in the text and a "Question and Answer" section posing and answering the 18 most frequently asked questions concerning the new strategy. Appended are a letter from the Secretary of Education, a White House press release, "fact sheet," and "remarks of the President at presentation of National Education Strategy." (WTB)

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A Message from the Secretary

The national education goals adopted by President Bush and the governors in 1990 are ambitious—but worthy of a great nation. The AMERICA 2000 Education Strategy described in the pages that follow is a bold, complex, and long-range plan to move every community in America toward those goals.

The AMERICA 2000 Education Strategy has a language of its own. One good way to begin reading this booklet is to turn first to the Glossary of Key Terms. In time, these terms will become familiar to the millions of people who are needed to make America all that it should be.

Lamar Alexander
Secretary of Education
April 18, 1991

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AMERICA 2000: An Education Strategy

Overview

AMERICA 2000 is a long-term strategy to help make this land all that it should be—a nine-year crusade to move us toward the six ambitious national education goals that the president and the governors adopted in 1990 to close our skills-and-knowledge gap.

The strategy anticipates major change in our 110,000 public and private schools, change in every American community, change in every American home, change in our attitude about learning.

This strategy is bold, complex and long-range. It will start quickly—but results won't come quickly. It will occupy us at least for the rest of this decade.

> ***We already know the direction in which we must go; the AMERICA 2000 strategy will help us get there.***

It will spur far-reaching changes in weary practices, outmoded assumptions and long-assumed constraints on education. It will require us to make some lifestyle changes, too. Yet few elements of this strategy are unprecedented. Today's best ideas, dedicated education reformers, impressive innovations and ambitious experiments already point the way. We already know the direction in which we must go; the AMERICA 2000 strategy will help us get there.

AMERICA 2000 is a national strategy, not a federal program. It honors local control, relies on local initiative, affirms states and localities as the senior partners in paying for education and the private sector as a vital partner, too. It recognizes that real education reform happens community by community and school by

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Four big trains, moving simultaneously down four parallel tracks: Better and more accountable schools; a New Generation of American Schools; a Nation of Students continuing to learn throughout our lives; and communities where learning can happen.

The Challenge: America's Skills and Knowledge Gap

Operation Desert Storm was a triumph of American character, ability and technology—a victory for America and all it stands for. It helped show that our nation can do whatever it decides to do—and that our people can learn anything they need to learn.

Still, eight years after the National Commission on Excellence in Education declared us a "Nation at Risk," we haven't turned things around in education. Almost all our education trend lines are flat. Our country is idling its engines, not knowing enough nor being able to do enough to make America all that it should be.

> *As a nation, we now invest more in education than in defense.*

Yet we're spending far more money on education. Total spending for elementary and secondary schools more than doubled since 1980—while the number of students remained about the same. In real terms, education spending increased approximately 55 percent more per public school student. As a nation, we now invest more in education than in defense. But the results have not improved, and we're not coming close to our potential or what is needed.

Nor is the rest of the world sitting idly by, waiting for America to catch up. Serious efforts at education improvement are under way by most of our international competitors and trading partners. Yet while we spend as much per student as almost any country in the world, American students are at or near the back of the pack in international comparisons. If we don't make radical changes, that is where they are going to stay.

Meanwhile, our employers cannot hire enough qualified workers. Immense sums are spent on remedial training, much of it at the college level. Companies expect skilled work—or abandon

projects that require it.

Shortcomings are not limited to what today's students are learning in school. The fact is that close to 40 percent of America's work force in the year 2000 is already in the work force today. They are the products of the same education system.

Perhaps 25 million adults are functionally illiterate. As many as 25 million more adult workers need to update their skills or knowledge.

While more than 5 million adults are taking basic education courses outside the schools, there is no systematic means of matching training to needs, no uniform standards measure the skills needed and the skills learned.

While the age of technology, information and communications rewards those nations where people learn new skills to stay ahead, we are still a country that groans at the prospect of going back to school. At best, we are reluctant students in a world that rewards learning.

And there is one more big problem: Today's young Americans spend barely 9 percent of their first eighteen years in school, on average. What of the other 91 percent, the portion spent elsewhere—at home, on playgrounds, in front of the television?

- For too many of our children, the family that should be their protector, advocate and moral anchor is itself in a state of deterioration.
- For too many of our children, such a family never existed.
- For too many of our children, the neighborhood is a place of menace, the street a place of violence.

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I. For Today's Students: Better and More Accountable Schools

Goals served: All six, but especially #2 (90 percent graduate from high school), #3 (competence in core subjects) and #4 (first in the world in science and mathematics).

Strategy: Through a 15-point accountability package, parents, teachers, schools and communities can all be encouraged to measure results, compare results and insist on change when the results aren't good enough.

Specifics:

New World Standards: Standards will be developed, in conjunction with the National Education Goals Panel. These New World Standards—for each of the five core subjects—will represent what young Americans need to know and be able to do if they are to live and work successfully in today's world. These standards will incorporate both knowledge and skills, to ensure that, when they leave school, young Americans are prepared for further study and the work force.

American Achievement Tests: In conjunction with the National Education Goals Panel, a new (voluntary) nationwide examination system will be developed, based on the five core subjects, tied to the New World Standards. These tests will be designed to foster good teaching and learning as well as to monitor student progress.

Encouragement to use the tests: Colleges will be urged to use the American Achievement Tests in admissions; employers will be urged to pay attention to them in hiring.

Presidential Citations for Educational Excellence: Citations will be awarded to high school students who do well on American Achievement Tests. Until those tests become available, Presidential Citations for Educational Excellence will be awarded based on

Advanced Placement tests.

Presidential Achievement Scholarships: Once enacted by Congress, these scholarships will reward academic excellence among needy college and university students.

Report Cards on results: In addition it reports to parents on how their children are doing, report cards will also provide clear (and comparable) public information on how schools, school districts and states are doing, as well as the entire nation. The national and state report cards will be prepared in conjunction with the National Education Goals Panel.

Report Card data collection: Congress will be asked to authorize the National Assessment of Educational Progress regularly to collect state-level data in grades four, eight and twelve in all five core subjects, beginning in 1994. Congress will also be asked to permit the use of National Assessment tests at district and school levels by states that wish to do so.

If standards, tests and report cards tell parents and voters how their schools are doing, choice gives them the leverage to act.

Choice: If standards, tests and report cards tell parents and voters how their schools are doing, choice gives them the leverage to act. Such choices should include all schools that serve the public and are accountable to public authority, regardless of who runs them. New incentives will be provided to states and localities to adopt comprehensive choice policies, and the largest federal school aid program (Chapter 1) will be revised to ensure that federal dollars follow the child to whatever extent state and local policies permit.

The school as the site of reform: Because real education improvement happens school by school, the teachers, principals and parents in each school must be given the authority—and the responsibility—to make important decisions about how the school will operate. Federal and state red tape that gets in the way needs to be cut. States will be encouraged to allow the leadership of individual schools to make decisions about how resources are used, and Congress will be asked to enact Education Flexibility legislation to remove federal constraints that impede the ability of states to spend education resources most effectively to raise achievement levels. The Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other private groups representing the private sector are to be commended—and encouraged—in their important efforts to create state and local policy environments in which school-by-school reform can succeed.

Merit Schools Program: Individual schools that make notable progress toward the national education goals deserve to be rewarded. Congress will be asked to enact a new program that will provide federal funds to states that can be used as rewards for such progress. States may "bank" those funds over several years to create even more incentives for successful schools and teams of school professionals.

Governors' Academies for School Leaders: Academies will be established with federal seed money, so that principals and other leaders in every state will be able to make their schools better and more accountable.

Governors' Academies for Teachers: Academies will also be established with federal seed money, so that teachers of the five core subjects in every state will be ready to help their students attain the New World Standards and pass the American Achievement Tests.

Differential teacher pay: Differential pay will be encouraged for those who teach well, who teach core subjects, who teach in

dangerous and challenging settings, or who serve as mentors for new teachers.

Alternative teacher and principal certification: As part of the AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991, Congress will be asked to make grants available to states and districts to develop alternative certification systems for teachers and principals. New college graduates and others seeking a career change into teaching or school leadership are often frustrated by certification requirements unrelated to subject area knowledge or leadership ability. This initiative will help states and districts to develop means by which individuals with an interest in teaching and school leadership can overcome these barriers.

Honor teachers: The federal government will honor and reward outstanding teachers in all five of the core subjects with Presidential Awards for Excellence in Education.

II. For Tomorrow's Students: A New Generation of American Schools

Goals served: All six. In fact, they are the principal standards against which every New American School will be measured.

Strategy:
We will unleash America's creative genius to invent and establish a New Generation of American Schools, one by one, community by community. These will be the best schools in the world, schools that enable their students to reach the national education goals, to achieve a quantum leap in learning, and to help make America all that it should be.

A number of excellent projects and inspired initiatives already point the way. These include Washington State's Schools for the 21st Century, Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, James Comer's School Development Program, Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools, RJR Nabisco's Next Century Schools, the Saturn School of Tomorrow in St. Paul, and other commendable efforts.

But this strategy goes beyond what these pioneers have begun. It enlists communities—aided by the best research and development the nation is capable of—in devising their own plans to break the mold and create their own one-of-a-kind high-performance schools. It relies on clear, rigorous measures of success—the New World Standards and American Achievement Tests discussed under Part I. The goal is to bring at least 535 such schools into existence by 1996. And it calls on leaders at all levels to join in this effort.

Specifics:
Research and development: America's business leaders will establish—and muster the private resources for—the New American Schools Development Corporation, a new nonprofit organization that will award contracts in 1992 to three to seven R & D

think tanks, school innovators, management consultants, and others. The president will ask his Education Policy Advisory Committee, as well as the Department of Education, to examine the work of these R & D Teams (and similar break-the-mold school reform efforts), and to report regularly on their progress to him and to the American people.

New American Schools: The mission of the R & D Teams is to help communities create schools that will reach the national education goals, including New World Standards (in all five core subjects) for all students, as monitored by the American Achievement Tests and similar measures. Once the R & D is complete and the schools are launched, the operating costs of the New American Schools will be about the same as those of conventional schools.

R&D Teams...can be expected to set aside all traditional assumptions about schooling and all the constraints that conventional schools work under.

Breaking the Mold: The R & D Teams—and the communities and states with which they work—can be expected to set aside all traditional assumptions about schooling and all the constraints that conventional schools work under. They will naturally need to consider the policy environment within which schools can thrive. Time, space, staffing and other resources in these new schools may be used in ways yet to be imagined. Some schools may make extensive use of computers, distance learning, interactive videodiscs and other modern tools. Some may radically alter the customary modes of teaching and learning and redesign the human relationships and organizational structures of the school. Whatever their approach, all New American Schools will be expected to produce extraordinary gains in student learning.

Note: A New American School does not necessarily mean new bricks-and-mortar. Nor does a New American School have to rely on technology; the quality of learning is what matters.

AMERICA 2000 Communities: The president will call on every community in the land to do four things: adopt the six national education goals for itself, establish a community-wide strategy for achieving them, develop a report card for measuring its progress, and demonstrate its readiness to create and support a New American School. Communities that accept this challenge will be designated (by the governors of their states) as "AMERICA 2000 Communities."

The First 535+ New American Schools: Each AMERICA 2000 Community may develop a plan to create one of the first 535+ New American Schools with limited federal support for start-up costs. In that plan, they will be expected to suggest their own answer to the question: What would it take to develop the best school in the world in *this* community, a school that serves the children of this community while also meeting the national education goals?

Governors, in conjunction with the secretary of education, will review these community-developed plans, with the assistance of a distinguished advisory panel, and will determine which AMERICA 2000 communities in each state will receive federal help in starting New American Schools. At least one New American School will be created in each congressional district by 1996. This distribution assures that every type of community in every part of the country will have the chance to create and establish one of the first 535+ New American Schools. The governors and the secretary will take added care to make sure that many such schools serve communities with high concentrations of "at-risk" children.

Funding: American business and other donors will make sufficient funds available through the New American Schools Development Corporation to jump-start the R & D Teams—at least $150-200

million. Congress will be asked to provide one-time grants of $1 million to each of the first 535+ New American Schools to help cover their start-up costs. State, local, and private sources will enable thousands more such schools to begin by the end of the decade.

Bringing America On-Line: The secretary, in consultation with the President's Science Advisor and the Director of the National Science Foundation will convene a group of experts to help determine how one or more electronic networks might be designed to provide the New American Schools with ready access to the best of information, research, instructional materials and educational expertise. The New American School R & D Teams will be asked for their recommendations on the same question. These networks may eventually serve all American schools as well as homes, libraries, colleges and other sites where learning occurs.

III. For the Rest of Us (Yesterday's Students/ Today's Work Force): A Nation of Students

Goals Served: All six, but especially #5 (adult literacy, citizenship, and ability to compete in the workplace).

Strategy:
Eighty-five percent of America's work force for the year 2000 is already in the work force today, so improving schools for today's and tomorrow's students is not enough to assure a competitive America in 2000. And we need more than job skills to live well in America today. We need to learn more to become better parents, neighbors, citizens and friends. Education is not just about making a living; it is also about making a life.

That is why the president is challenging adult Americans to "go back to school" and make this a "Nation of Students." For our children to understand the importance of their own education, we must demonstrate that learning is important to grown-ups, too. We must ourselves "go back to school." The president is urging every American to continue learning throughout his or her life, using the myriad formal and informal means available to gain further knowledge and skills.

Education is not just about making a living; it is also about making a life.

Specifics:
Private-Sector Skills and Standards: Business and labor will be asked to adopt a strategy to establish job-related (and industry-specific) skill standards, built around core proficiencies, and to

develop "skill certificates" to accompany these standards. The president has charged the secretaries of Labor and Education to spearhead a public-private partnership to help develop voluntary standards for all industries. Federal funds are being sought to assist with this effort, which will be informed by the work of the Labor Department's Commission on Work-Based Learning and the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills.

Skill Clinics: The strategy will promote one-stop assessment and referral Skill Clinics in every large community and work site, including many federal agencies. In the Skill Clinics, people can readily find out how their present skills compare with those they'd like to have—or that they need for a particular job—and where they can acquire the skills and knowledge they still need.

Federal Leadership: Federal agencies will set an example for other employers by embarking upon a government-wide program of skill upgrading. The president has asked the director of the Office of Personnel Management to lead this important initiative.

Recommitment to Literacy: The nation's efforts will be strengthened by developing performance standards for all federally aided adult education programs and holding programs accountable for meeting them; by expanding the National Adult Literacy Survey so that we have better information on a regular basis about the condition of literacy among adults. The administration will also work with Congress and the governors to enact sound literacy and adult education legislation.

National Conference on Education for Adult Americans: A major conference will be called to develop a nationwide effort to improve the quality and accessibility of the many education and training programs, services and institutions that serve adults.

IV. Communities Where Learning Can Happen

Goals Served: All six, but especially #1 and #6 (children starting ready to learn) and (drug- and violence-free schools).

Strategy:
Even if we successfully complete the first, second and third parts of the AMERICA 2000 education strategy, we still will not have done the job. Even with accountability embedded in every aspect of education, achieving the goals requires a renaissance of sound American values—proven values such as strength of family, parental responsibility, neighborly commitment, the community with caring of churches, civic organizations, business, labor and the media.

It's time to end the "no fault" era of heedlessness and neglect, and as we shape tomorrow's schools, to rediscover the timeless values that are necessary for achievement.

Government at every level can play a useful role, and it is incumbent upon all of us to see that this is done efficiently and adequately. But much of the work of creating and sustaining healthy communities, communities where education really happens, can only be performed by those who live in them: by parents, families, neighbors and other caring adults; by churches, neighborhood associations, community organizations, voluntary groups and the other "little platoons" that have long characterized well-functioning American communities. Such groups are essential to the building of relationships that nurture children and provide them people and places to which they can turn for help, for role models and for guidance.

Specifics:
AMERICA 2000 Communities: The president is challenging every city, town and neighborhood in the nation to become an AMERICA 2000 Community by:

(1) Adopting the six national education goals for itself

(2) Establishing a community-wide strategy for achieving them

(3) Developing a report card for measuring its progress

(4) Demonstrating its readiness to create and support a New American School

Designation by Governors. Designation as an HMBHC by 2000 Communities will be made by the governors, with 555 of them getting help in creating the first New American Schools by 1996.

Recognition. The president and his administration will promote HMBHC by 2000 Communities with national attention to and awards for community planning and progress with special emphasis on their creation in areas of concentration of at-risk children.

The Coalition. The Domestic Policy Council's Economic Empowerment Task Force, working with the National Governors' Association and other state and local officials, will seek ways to maximize program flexibility and effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and communities, including streamlined eligibility requirements for federal programs, better integration of services, and reduced red tape.

Individual Responsibility. Increased attention will be focused on adult behavior, responsibility for children, and family and community values essential for strong schools—including parents as teachers of their children and parents as school partners.

What Does What?

The Executive [illegible] is [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible].

The President: As Commander-in-Chief and the [illegible] (Article [illegible]), he [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible]. He [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

The Congress: [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Glossary of Key Terms

American Achievement Tests: The anchor for a new system of voluntary national examinations at the fourth, eighth and twelfth grades in each of the five core subjects, tied to the New World Standards.

AMERICA 2000: An Education Strategy: An action plan to move America toward the six national education goals through a populist crusade, by asserting accountability in today's schools, unleashing America's genius to jump-start a new generation of American schools, transforming a "Nation at Risk" into a "Nation of Students," and nurturing the family and community values essential to personal responsibility, strong schools and sound education for all children.

AMERICA 2000 Communities: Communities, designated by the governors, that meet the president's four-part challenge: that (1) adopt the six national education goals for themselves, (2) create a community-wide plan for achieving them, (3) develop a Report Card to measure their progress, and (4) demonstrate their readiness to create and support a New American School. 535+ such communities will open New American Schools by 1996.

Better and More Accountable Schools: A 15-part improvement package for today's schools, designed to move America toward the six national education goals, including New World Standards, American Achievement Tests, Report Cards and school choice.

Federal Role: While the federal government's role in education is and should remain limited, the administration is committed to providing R & D, assessment and information, assuring equal opportunity and, above all, leading the nationwide effort to achieve the six education goals.

535+ by 1996: At least 535 New American Schools will be up and running in AMERICA 2000 Communities across the country—at least one in each congressional district—by 1996, as well as in Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories.

From a "Nation at Risk" to a "Nation of Students": Adults—today's work force—"go back to school" for further study, to learn a new skill to help them earn their living, or to acquire additional knowledge to help them live a better life.

Governors' Academies for School Leaders: State or regional Academies catalyzed with federal seed money, that train principals and other school leaders in the design and execution of school improvement strategies, accountability mechanisms, and school-site management.

Governors' Academies for Teachers: State or regional Academies in each of the five core subjects, catalyzed with federal seed money, that train teachers in the five core subjects to ensure that they possess the knowledge, the skills, and the tools they need to help students meet the New World Standards and do well on the American Achievement Tests.

Job Skill Standards and Job Skill Certificates: Standards to be established jointly by employers and labor for each industry, beginning with the fundamental categories and definitions developed by the Department of Labor's SCANS Commission, that will assist workers to see what skills are needed to perform a job and to evaluate their own grasp of those skills. Certificates will be given (by the private sector) to those who acquire the skills and meet the standards.

New American Schools Development Corporation: A non-profit, non-governmental organization, created by American business leaders and other private citizens, that will receive funds, sponsor a competition and establish, support and monitor three to seven R & D Teams. The mission of these teams is to help AMERICA 2000 Communities invent and create their own new American schools.

New Generation of American Schools: Major nationwide effort to invent and create 535+ schools by 1996 (and many more

thereafter) that are the best in the world. Located in AMERICA 2000 Communities, these schools will reach the national education goals at operational costs not exceeding those of conventional schools.

New World Standards: Definitions of what American students should be expected to know and be able to do upon completion of schooling, meant to function as benchmarks against which student and school performance can be measured.

Populist Crusade: A national crusade led by the president—school by school, neighborhood by neighborhood, community by community—to transform American education and to spur fundamental changes in the ways we educate ourselves and our children. It also will be a restoration of what we think is important, a homecoming in sound values and community attitudes.

R & D Teams: Partnerships of corporations, universities, think tanks, school innovators, management consultants and others, selected through a competitive process by the New American Schools Development Corporation to receive up to $30 million each over three years to conceptualize and invent New American Schools.

Report Cards: A public reporting system on the performance of education institutions and systems, providing maximum information at the school, district, state and national levels.

School as the Site of Reform: The individual school is education's key action-and-accountability unit. The surest way to reform education is to give schools and their leaders the freedom and authority to make important decisions about what happens, while being held accountable for making well-conceived efforts at improvement and for achieving desired results.

Skill Clinics: Just as health clinics diagnose health and refer people to appropriate care, skill clinics will be centers in every

community and large workplace where people can go to get their own job skills evaluated, find out what skills they need to learn to hold a certain job or get a better one, and find out where they can go to gain those skills.

Skills and Knowledge Gap: Too many of us lack the knowledge—especially of English, mathematics, science, history and geography—and the skills necessary to live and work successfully in the world as it is today.

Unleash America's Genius: Bringing the best minds and creative energies from education, technology, management and other fields together in a pioneering effort to create a New Generation of American Schools that are the best in the world.

Some Questions and Answers

Q. How much will the AMERICA 2000 plan cost?
A. The Department of Education will support appropriate activities under existing programs in this year's budget to get AMERICA 2000 off the ground—and the president is requesting $690 million for the strategy in the 1992 budget. That does not include programs in many other departments (e.g. Labor, HHS, HUD), which are essential to the success of AMERICA 2000. Nor does it include the $150-200 million from the business community to jump-start the New American Schools R&D Teams.

But two other points need to be made. First, state and local governments provide more than 90 percent of all education funding—a responsibility both the president and the governors have concluded should not be altered. But AMERICA 2000 is not expected to raise state or local spending.

Second, both state/local funding and federal funding have increased dramatically in recent years without significant results. Since 1980, public funding is up 33 percent per student (after inflation). The answer does not lie in spending more money on old ways—but to redirect our resources and our energies to new approaches.

Nobody says education is free, but ingenuity, commitment and accountability matter more than money.

With state, local and private sources doing their parts, and the federal government doing its, the elements of this strategy that may need money will have what they require. Excellent schools, let's remember, don't have to cost more than mediocre ones. Nobody says education is free, but ingenuity, commitment and accountability matter more than money.

Q. Aren't the New American Schools going to be more expensive than today's schools?
A. No. It will be a requirement for the R & D Teams that the new schools they design can operate at costs no more than conventional schools.

Q. Is the R & D for New American Schools likely to stress technology and glitz rather than teaching and learning?
A. Schools should certainly avail themselves of the help that technology can furnish. (Some say that schools are one of the few institutions in society largely untouched even by the Industrial Revolution, much less by the Information Age.) But technology is no cure-all for educational and social problems. Great schools are built by people, people who care and who act. A great school is one where adults teach children sound values and good character as well as knowledge and skills. Their secret ingredient is human, not electronic.

We expect that the R & D Teams will begin by erasing *all* conventional assumptions and constraints about schooling: the schedule (and calendar), curriculum, class size, the pace of learning, teacher/student ratios, adult roles, teacher recruitment, health and nutrition, discipline, staff development, organizational and management structures, resource allocation, students-as-tutors, the nature of instructional materials, and much more.

Q. Why should there be only 535+ New American Schools?
A. We want there to be thousands. These are just the *first* 535+. In time there could be 110,000. We believe—and hope—that many states and communities will move quickly toward their own New American Schools.

Q. What's the plus sign in "535+?"
A. We propose to provide federal start-up funds not just for one New American School for every Senator and Representative that a state has, but also for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories.

Q. Is it worth becoming an AMERICA 2000 Community if you don't win one of the first 535+ New American Schools?
A. It sure is. Every neighborhood, town or city that cares about its kids, its schools and its future will want to become an AMERICA 2000 Community. The act of creating such a community—by meeting the president's four-part challenge—will itself do immense good. Consider, for example, what it means to devise a community plan to ensure that all children enter school ready to learn...that all the schools are safe and drug free...that all adults will be literate. We predict that, by the year 2000, there will be literally thousands of AMERICA 2000 Communities. They will be the pace-setters, the beacons, the heartbeat of this education strategy—and of their children's future.

Q. Will choice apply to private schools as well as public? Will it apply to religiously affiliated schools?
A. It will apply to all schools except where the courts find a constitutional bar. The power of choice is in the parents' leverage both to change schools and to make change in the schools. The definition of "public school" should be broadened to mean any school that serves the public and is held accountable by a public authority.

Q. What do you say to those who argue that school choice mainly benefits the well-to-do and the white?
A. Rich parents, white and non-white, already have school choice. They can move, or pay for private schooling. The biggest beneficiaries of new choice policies will be those who don't now have any alternatives; with choice they can find a better school for their children or use that leverage to improve the school their children now attend.

Q. Aren't the places that most need radical changes in their arrangements for children—those with the highest concentrations of at-risk girls and boys—those least able to make such changes?
A. It has been demonstrated in a number of communities that we must never underestimate the effectiveness of a community that

decides to transform itself. It's true, of course, that the AMERICA 2000 strategy can do the greatest good for troubled rural and inner-city areas, and we all need to be sure that they get whatever catalyst help they need to take part.

Q. Will the American Achievement Tests compete with the work of the National Education Goals Panel?
A. No, we expect to follow the Panel's lead in developing the New World Standards and the American Achievement Tests.

Q. Do national tests mean a national curriculum?
A. No—although surveys and polls indicate that most Americans have no objection to the idea of a national curriculum. The American Achievement Tests will examine the *results* of education. They have nothing to say about how those results are produced, what teachers do in class from one day to the next, what instructional materials are chosen, what lesson plans are followed. They should result in *less* regulation of the means of education—because they focus exclusively on the ends.

Q. When will the new tests be ready?
A. In 1994, we will have available a system of high quality individual tests, at least in reading, writing and mathematics—education's traditional "three R's"—for states and localities that want them. Because the new American Achievement Tests probably cannot be perfected that quickly, we will ask Congress to authorize the rapid deployment of an individual version of tests used by the existing National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Q. Do we really need another test? Aren't tests biased against minorities?
A. A nationwide system of high quality national exams—more than one version, but calibrated to the same standards—will probably begin to take the place of some of today's numerous testing schemes. As for bias, the new tests will be screened to eliminate it. Bear in mind that minority parents also want to know how well their children—and the schools their children attend—are doing in relation to the national education goals and standards.

Sometimes less-than-satisfactory news serves to catalyze needed changes.

Q. Can all six national goals really be reached?
A. They are all ambitious. Some, like literacy for *all* adults, and leading the *whole world* in math and science, are very challenging. But each is a worthy national objective, and we should not rest until all are achieved. The AMERICA 2000 strategy will give us the tools we need to achieve them.

> ***It's another of those historic American challenges—and it starts in every community, every school, every household.***

Q. How much of this is just politics?
A. Better education benefits the *entire* nation, not one particular political party. AMERICA 2000 is a non-partisan education reform strategy. There is plenty of room on these four trains for every American, and we begin with the assumption that everyone will want to climb aboard. Sure, we'll argue about the details in the formal political process and elsewhere, and the strategy will doubtless be improved through those arguments. But let's talk them through in a spirit of wanting a first-rate education for all our children, in every corner of this great land.

Q. What's the single most important part of the AMERICA 2000 strategy?
A. The most controversial may be school choice—at least until it's well understood. The knottiest is probably standards-and-testing, which is technically quite complex. The most dramatic is the R & D for New American Schools. But the most important may be the AMERICA 2000 Communities! Washington cannot achieve the six education goals for the country; that has to happen at the local level. It's another of those historic American challenges—and it starts in every community, every school, every household.

Q. What can parents do to help?

A. A thousand things. They are the keys to their children's education, and there is no part of the AMERICA 2000 strategy in which they do not have an important role. As for what they can do *today*—they could read a story to their children, check to see that tonight's homework is done, thank their child's teacher, talk with their teachers and principals about how things are going in school, and set some examples for their children of virtuous, self-disciplined and generous behavior.

Q. What can the media do to help?

A. Recognize that education is an ongoing story every day—a local story *and* a national story. The details are seldom dramatic. But this is the challenge that will tell the story of America's future. By focusing on the story every day, and assigning their best to cover it, the media can help win the battle.

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standards for the five core subjects, and that outside of the costs of the initial research and development, the schools operate on a budget comparable to conventional schools. The architects of the New American Schools should break the mold. Build for the next century. Reinvent -- literally start from scratch and reinvent the American school. No question should be off limits, no concern automatically assumed. We're not after one single solution for every school. We're interested in finding every way to make schools better.

There's a special place in inventing the New American School for the corporate community, for business and labor. And I invite you to work with us not simply to transform our schools, but to transform every American adult into a student.

Fortunately, we have a secret weapon in America's system of colleges and universities -- the finest in the entire world. The corporate community can take the lead by creating a voluntary private system of world-class standards for the workplace. Employers should set up skill centers where workers can seek advice and learn new schools. But most importantly, every company and every labor union must bring the worker into the classroom and bring the classroom into the workplace.

We'll encourage every federal agency to do the same. And to prove no one's ever too old to learn, Lamar, with his indefatigable determination and leadership, has convinced me to become a student again myself. Starting next week, I'll begin studying. And I want to know how to operate a computer. (Laughter.) Very candidly -- (applause) -- I don't expect this new tutorial to teach me how to set the clock on the VCR or anything complicated. (Laughter.) But I want to be computer literate, and I'm not. There's a lot of kids, thank God, that are. And I want to learn, and I will.

The workplace isn't the only place we must improve opportunities for education. Across this nation, we must cultivate communities where children can learn. Communities where the school is more than a refuge, more than a solitary island of calm amid chaos. Where the school is the living center of a community where people care -- people care for each other and their futures. Not just in the school but in the neighborhood. Not just in the classroom, but in the home.

Our challenge amounts to nothing less than a revolution in American education. A battle for our future. And now, I ask all Americans to be points of light in the crusade that counts the most: the crusade to prepare our children and ourselves for the exciting future that looms ahead.

What I've spoken about this afternoon are the broad strokes of this National Education Strategy. Accountable schools for today, a new generation of schools for tomorrow. A nation of students committed to a lifetime of learning and communities where all our children can learn.

There are four people here today who symbolize each element of this strategy and point the way forward for our reforms. Esteban Fagan -- Steve -- an award-winning 6th grade student in science and history at East Harlem Tech, a choice school. Steve? Right here, I think. Stand up, now. (Applause.)

Mike Bognino. "Lead Teacher" in the Saturn School in St. Paul, Minnesota, where teachers have already helped reinvent the American school. Mike, where are you? Right here, sir. Thank you. (Applause.)

David Kelley. A high-tech troubleshooter at the Michelin Tire plant in Greenville, South Carolina. David has spent the equivalent of one full year of his four years at Michelin back at his college expanding his skills. David? There he is. (Applause.)

Finally, Michelle Moore, of Missouri. A single mother,

active in Missouri's Parents as Teachers program. She wants her year-old son, Alston, to arrive for his first day of school ready to learn. Michelle? (Applause.)

So, to sum it up, for these four people and for all the others like them, the revolution in American education has already begun. Now I ask all Americans to be points of light in the crusade that counts the most: the crusade to prepare our children and ourselves for the exciting future that looms ahead. At any moment in every mind, the miracle of learning beckons us all.

Between now and the year 2000 there is not one moment or one miracle to waste.

Thank you all. Thank you for your interest, for your dedication. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END 2:24 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

APRIL 18, 1991

AMERICA 2000: THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION STRATEGY

FACT SHEET

The President today outlined his strategy to move the Nation toward achieving the national education goals and educational excellence for all Americans. The President believes we must restructure and revitalize America's education system by the year 2000.

Emphasizing that this effort is a national challenge, the President asked all Americans to take part in "the crusade that counts most -- the crusade to prepare our children and ourselves for the exciting future that looms ahead."

AMERICA 2000 builds on four related themes:

- Creating better and more accountable schools for today's students;
- Creating a New Generation of American Schools for tomorrow's students;
- Transforming America into a Nation of Students; and
- Making our communities places where learning will happen.

I. CREATING BETTER AND MORE ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOLS FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

The President called on all Americans to help create better and more accountable schools based on world class standards and the principle of accountability. He encouraged all elements of our communities -- families, businesses, unions, places of worship, neighborhood organizations and other voluntary associations -- to work together with our schools to help the Nation achieve educational excellence.

A. World Class Standards in Five Core Subjects

The President believes the time has come to establish world class standards for what our children should know and be able to do in five core subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, and geography.

- Through the National Education Goals Panel, and working with interested parties throughout the Nation, the President and the Governors will develop a timetable for establishing national standards in these five subjects, and in September 1991, and each year thereafter, the panel will report to the Nation on progress toward the national education goals.

- The standards are intended to lift the entire education system and improve the learning achievement of all students. The President and the Governors oppose a national curriculum or federalizing our education system.

B. A System of Voluntary National Examinations

Through the efforts of the National Education Goals Panel, a system of voluntary examinations will be developed and made available for all fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students in the five core subjects.

- These American Achievement Tests will challenge all students to strive to meet the world class standards and ensure that, when they leave school, students are prepared for further study and the workforce. The tests will measure higher order skills (i.e., they will not be strictly multiple choice tests).

- The President, working with the Nation's Governors, will seek Congressional authorization for State-level National Assessment of Educational Progress assessments and for optional use of these assessments at district and school levels.

- Students who distinguish themselves on the American Achievement Tests will receive a Presidential Citation for Educational Excellence in recognition of their outstanding achievement.

- The President will seek authorization for Presidential Achievement Scholarships to reward academic excellence among low income students pursuing postsecondary education opportunities. These financial awards will be based on superior high school and college performance.

C. Schools as the Site of Reform

The Administration will help strengthen the capacity of elementary and secondary schools to improve results and to innovate by increasing flexibility in decisionmaking at the State, district, and school levels and encouraging report cards on performance.

- In addition to an annual National Report Card, the President will encourage schools, school districts, and States to issue regular report cards on their education performance. These report cards will measure results and progress toward achieving the national education goals.

- As part of his AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991, the President will again seek legislation that will allow greater flexibility in the use of Federal resources for education in exchange for enhanced accountability for results.

- To stimulate reform in mathematics and science education, the AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991 will include $40 million for new grants to school districts that show significant gains in student achievement. Awards will be used for continued improvements in these vital subjects.

- The AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991 also will seek funds for a Merit Schools Program for States to award individual schools that demonstrate significant progress toward the national education goals. States may "bank" funds over several years to create even more incentives for successful schools.

D. Providing and Promoting School Choice

The President believes that educational choice for parents and students is critical to improving our schools.

- The President will promote State and local choice programs as part of his AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991.

  -- A $200 million Education Certificate Program Support Fund will provide incentive grants to local school districts with qualified education certificate programs that enhance parental choice.

  -- National school choice demonstration projects will be supported through a $30 million initiative.

- The Administration also will seek ways to ensure that Federal education programs are more supportive of choice.

E. Teachers and Principals

America's teachers and principals are on the front lines of transforming our schools. As part of his AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991, the President will propose several initiatives to promote outstanding leadership in our schools.

- Presidential Awards for Excellence in Education will recognize and reward outstanding teachers across America.

- The President will encourage States and communities to provide alternative routes of certification through one-time grants to States to support implementation of alternative certification.

- In order to improve the training of school principals and other school leaders, the President will propose establishing Governors' Academies in every State with Federal seed money to enhance principal training through instructional and mentoring programs.

- The President will seek to establish Governors' Academies for America's teachers with Federal seed money to offer advanced instruction focusing on the five core academic disciplines.

The President also encouraged States to consider differential pay and financial and other awards for those who excel in teaching, teach core subjects, teach in challenging settings, and serve as mentors for new teachers.

II. CREATING A NEW GENERATION OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS FOR TOMORROW'S STUDENTS

The President today challenged the best minds in America to design -- and help communities create -- the best schools in the world.

A. Research and Development

A series of Research and Development Teams, funded by contributions from the business community, will help design a New Generation of American Schools.

- America's business leaders will establish and mobilize private resources for the New American Schools Development Corporation, a new non-profit organization that will award contracts in 1992 to between three and seven Research and Development Teams. These teams may consist of

corporations, universities, think tanks, school innovators and others. The teams' products will be available to the American people.

- The mission of these teams is to help communities create schools that will reach the national education goals, including world class standards in the five core subjects for all students, as monitored by the American Achievement Tests and similar measures.

- The President will ask his Education Policy Advisory Committee, as well as the Department of Education, to examine the work of these Research and Development Teams and to report on their progress.

B. New American Schools

The President will ask Congress to provide $550 million in one-time start-up funds to create at least 535 New American Schools that "break the mold" of existing school designs.

- These funds will provide up to $1 million for each New American School to underwrite special staff training, instructional materials, or other support the school needs. The goal is to have at least one New American School operating in each Congressional district by September 1996.

- Once the schools are launched, the operating costs of the New American Schools will be no more than those of conventional schools.

- The President also will ask Congress for start-up funds to help design state-of-the-art technology appropriate for New American Schools.

- A New American School does not necessarily mean new bricks-and-mortar. Nor does a New American School have to rely on technology; the quality of learning is what matters.

C. AMERICA 2000 Communities

The President called on every community in the country to do four things:

- Adopt the six national education goals;

- Establish a community-wide strategy for achieving the goals;

- Develop a report card for measuring its progress; and

- Demonstrate its readiness to create and support a New American School.

Communities that accept this challenge will be designated, by the Governors of their States, as "AMERICA 2000 Communities."

- Governors, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, will review community-developed plans with the assistance of a distinguished advisory panel and will determine which AMERICA 2000 Communities in each State will receive Federal financial support in starting New American Schools.

- The Governors and the Secretary will ensure that many such schools serve communities with high concentrations of children at risk.

D. Leadership at All Levels

Transforming American education and creating a New Generation of American Schools will require the commitment of America's leaders at all levels.

- The President welcomes the commitment by American business to contribute $150-$200 million to support the Research and Development effort.

- The President asked the Nation's Governors to lead the New American Schools effort in their States.

- The President challenged State legislatures to: support the creation and operation of New American Schools; embrace the world class standards and adopt the American Achievement Tests; and work toward school, district, and State-level report cards.

- The President encouraged civic leaders to help organize community plans all across the country to seek designation as an AMERICA 2000 Community, and to help plan and operate New American Schools. Business can encourage local schools to use the world class standards and American Achievement Tests, and encourage schools to issue report cards on their performance.

- The President called on educators to accept new roles and to take risks. Teachers, principals, and other educators are asked to work to develop a consensus on the world class standards and to determine what it would take to create a New American School in each community.

E. Families and Children Devoted to Learning

The President called on parents to urge use of world class standards, American Achievement Tests, and report cards by local schools. Parents must play a key

role in creating New American Schools in their own communities and must work with children in the home to improve children's performance in school.

III. TRANSFORMING AMERICA INTO "A NATION OF STUDENTS"

The President believes that learning is a life-long challenge. Approximately 85 percent of America's workers for the year 2000 are already in the workforce. Improving schools for today's and tomorrow's students is not sufficient to ensure a competitive America in the year 2000. The President called on Americans to move from "A Nation at Risk" to "A Nation of Students" by continuing to enhance the knowledge and skills of all Americans.

A. Strengthening the Nation's Education Effort for Yesterday's Students, Today's Workers

To advance the goal of improving literacy for all Americans:

- The President will push for greater accountability and choice in the Adult Education Act, and will advance these twin principles in new adult literacy activities proposed under the new AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act of 1991.

- The Department of Education will provide regular, timely, and reliable information by expanding the National Adult Literacy Survey and collecting information about literacy efforts on a regular basis.

B. Establishing Standards for Job Skills and Knowledge

The President urged business and labor cooperatively to develop -- and then to use -- world class standards and core proficiencies for each industry. Federal resources will be sought to provide start-up assistance for this effort.

C. Creating Business and Community Skill Clinics

Today's workers will be assisted through Skill Clinics -- one-stop service centers located in businesses and communities across America where adults can get job skill diagnosis and referral services.

- The Administration will urge businesses to make Skill Clinics available to their employees and encourage AMERICA 2000 Communities to establish community Skill Clinics.

- Federal departments and agencies will be encouraged to establish such Skill Clinics and, working with the Office of Personnel Management, will be encouraged to undertake activities to upgrade their employees' skills.

D. Enhancing Job Training Opportunities

The Domestic Policy Council Job Training 2000 Working Group will review current Federal job training efforts and identify successful ways of motivating and enabling individuals to receive the comprehensive services, education, and skills necessary to achieve economic independence.

E. Mobilizing A "Nation of Students"

The President will work to transform "A Nation at Risk" into "A Nation of Students."

- The President called on the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Labor to convene business and labor leaders, education and training experts, and Federal, State, and local government officials at a national conference on the education of adult Americans to launch a national effort to transform adult America into a "Nation of Students."

IV. MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES PLACES WHERE LEARNING WILL HAPPEN

The President called on communities to adopt the six national education goals as their own; set a community strategy to meet them; produce a report card to measure results; and agree to create and support a New American School.

The President believes that it is essential to reaffirm such enduring values as personal responsibility, individual action, and other core principles that must underpin life in a democratic society. The aim of the AMERICA 2000 Community campaign is to make our communities places where learning will happen.

A. Greater Parental Involvement

The President urged parents to become more involved in their children's education and in the work of the New American Schools.

- Parents and teachers should encourage children to study more, learn more, and strive to meet higher academic standards.

- The President encouraged parents to read aloud daily to their children, especially their younger children.

9. Enhanced Program Effectiveness for Children and Communities

The President is committed to making government work better to improve programs for America's children and communities.

- Working through the Domestic Policy Council Economic Empowerment Task Force and with the Nation's Governors and other officials, the Administration will undertake better coordination of existing Federal programs with corresponding State and local activities.

- As part of this effort, existing program eligibility requirements will be reviewed in order to streamline them and reduce Federal red tape. Wherever possible, States will be afforded maximum flexibility to design and implement integrated State, local, and Federal programming.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

Dear Friend of Education:

Even before he was inaugurated, President Bush committed himself and his Administration to the improvement of American education. He has already honored that commitment with two major initiatives that have paved the way for substantial educational reform. The first of these was the historic 1989 Education Summit at Charlottesville, which led to the establishment of our six national goals. The second was the recent unveiling of America 2000: An Education Strategy, a comprehensive plan to revitalize and reinvent America's schools.

This new plan is bold and far-reaching. It outlines a national strategy, not a Federal program. It promotes independence for teachers and local schools and at the same time demands a new level of accountability for student performance. It enlists the financial and technical assistance of the private sector. It calls on all Americans, young and old, to see education as a lifelong quest for excellence. In short, it involves everyone in the attainment of our national goals.

I look forward to working with you to make educational excellence the highest priority of our Nation.

Sincerely,

Lamar Alexander

Lamar Alexander